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INFLUENZA DISEASE IN PREGNANCY AND AUTISM

Last week *Pediatrics* published, "[Autism After Infection, Febrile Episodes, and Antibiotic Use During Pregnancy: An Exploratory Study](#)." The study raised the possibility that influenza and fever during pregnancy increase the risk of autism in infants, but the findings are not conclusive. The researchers studied the records of more than 96,000 children and interviewed their mothers about infections during pregnancy. About 1% of those children had autism spectrum disorder or infantile autism. The researchers found signs that flu during pregnancy doubled the risk of infantile autism and that prolonged fever during pregnancy tripled it.

Related News Articles

- [Study hints at link between flu in pregnancy, infant autism](#)
- [Flu, fever linked with autism in pregnancy study](#)
- [Influenza, Fever, And Autism: How Much Should You Worry?](#)

INFLUENZA VACCINE COVERAGE IN PREGNANT WOMEN

According to a new study in [Vaccine](#), pregnant women receiving influenza vaccine declined slightly the year after the 2009 H1N1 pandemic but remained above 50%. The study found that vaccination by an obstetrician was common but decreased from 71% to 60%. While most women (76%) in 2010-11 reported that their provider recommended influenza vaccination, the prevalence of a discussion about the vaccine dropped from 24% to 11%. Safety concerns about the vaccine, however, also dropped, with 66% of women in 2009-10 voicing such concerns but only 27% doing so in 2010-11.

INFLUENZA NEWS ARTICLES

- [Italy lifts ban on Novartis flu vaccines](#)
- [BioCryst may drop quest for US approval of peramivir](#)
- [Flu Vaccine Protects a Pregnant Women, Her Unborn Baby and Her Newborn Baby](#)
- [Nurses Know: Vaccine tops simple steps to help prevent influenza](#)
- [Tamiflu Efficacy, Safety in Doubt, Says BMJ](#)

PANDEMIC & AVIAN INFLUENZA

- [Are we prepared to help low-resource communities cope with a severe influenza pandemic?](#)
- [FDA panel endorses H5N1 vaccine with adjuvant](#)
- [FDA Panel Gives Nod to Bird Flu Vaccine](#)

INFLUENZA RELATED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- [Seasonal flu vaccine efficacy and its determinants in children and non-elderly adults: A systematic review with meta-analyses of controlled trials](#)
- [Global production capacity of seasonal influenza vaccine in 2011](#)
- [Correlates of seasonal flu vaccination among U.S. home health aides](#)

NEW YORK TIMES REPORT ON FLU VACCINE

Last week in FluBytes a New York Times blog, "[Reassessing Flu Shots as the Season Draws Near](#)" was mentioned. The CDC issued a response (see page 2 of FluBytes) which concludes with, "Flu is a serious disease that places a significant burden on the nation's health. CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination of all persons aged 6 months and older. Getting vaccinated yourself also helps protect the people around you. Any suggestion that people should not get a flu vaccine or that hand washing is a substitute for vaccination does a disservice to public health."

PRESENTATIONS FROM OCTOBER'S ACIP MEETING

Powerpoint slides are now available [here](#). Presentations include: Influenza Surveillance, Systematic Review of the Effectiveness of Live-Attenuated vs. Inactivated Vaccines for Healthy Children, Cell Culture information and more.

WEBINAR SLIDES

On Wednesday the Virtual Immunization Communication Network held a [webinar featuring](#) Veronica McNally, a Michigan mother who lost her daughter to pertussis earlier this year. The webinar also included information on resources for [National Influenza Vaccination Week](#), December 2-8, 2012.

FLU VACCINES REQUIRED TO BE ENTERED INTO MCIR

As a reminder, providers are required to report ALL immunizations, including flu, administered to every child born after December 31, 1993 and less than 20 years of age within 72 hours of administration into the [Michigan Care Improvement Registry \(MCIR\)](#). Please ensure you are entering your doses for adults as well!

FLU RESOURCES

Stay up-to-date with:

MDCH: www.michigan.gov/flu

CDC: www.cdc.gov/flu

HHS: www.flu.gov

Check out the [MDCH Flu Gallery](#) for posters you can use this flu season. An example of a flu poster to reach pregnant women is included on page 3.

CDC'S RESPONSE TO NEW YORK TIMES REPORT ON INFLUENZA VACCINE

CDC's Influenza Division prepared the response below. An excerpted version of this response was posted in the comments section and further condensed letter to the editor has been submitted for possible publication in the print edition of the paper

1) Flu vaccines are beneficial. While how well flu vaccines work can vary, the findings of many studies from multiple countries across age groups support the benefits of vaccination, especially during years when the vaccine is well-matched to circulating viruses. Vaccine effectiveness study results from 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 show effectiveness of 50-60%. Certainly CDC would like better influenza vaccines, especially for the elderly, who don't respond as well to vaccination. Efforts are underway on this front. In the meantime, however, influenza vaccines offer the best protection we have and should be used widely for maximum benefit.

2) There is data to support the benefits of influenza vaccination. The column did not give proper consideration to the full spectrum of data available supporting the benefits of influenza vaccination, including observational studies of influenza vaccine effectiveness. Study designs have improved dramatically in recent years and results are useful in informing clinical practice and public health, especially when randomized controlled trials would be considered unethical.

3) While good practice, hand washing is not a substitute for vaccination. The column concludes with the "option" of frequent hand washing. CDC does recommend everyday preventive actions (including hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and keeping a distance between people who are sick and those who are well) to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like influenza. These common-sense measures, however, are an adjunct to influenza vaccination, not an alternative. Additionally, of these "non-pharmaceutical interventions," the evidence-base for hand washing to prevent influenza is weakest. The main way that influenza is thought to spread is through droplets from coughs and sneezes of someone who is sick. Sadly, hand washing is not likely to protect you if someone who is sick sneezes in your face.

FluBytes is distributed to MDCH flu partners for informational and communication purposes. Please feel free to distribute widely. Archived editions of FluBytes can be found [here](#). To access archived editions of MI FluFocus click [here](#).

Protect Your Baby Before He is Born.



Get Vaccinated Against
Flu and Pertussis
(Whooping Cough).



Available at: www.michigan.gov/flu → Click on “Flu Gallery”